

Jacobus Johannes Cornelis Greyling

"Japie Greyling"

25 June 1890 - 17 August 1954

And his nemesis

Captain J. E. B. Seely

Jacobus Johannes Cornelis (Japie) Greyling, was born 25 June 1890 on the farm Smaldeel in the Hoopstad district, Orange Free State. Son of Barend Christiaan Greyling and Susanna Josina van der Merwe and twin brother of Cornelis Gerhardus Jacob Greyling.

Usually when this story is told, the focus is place on the hero, Japie. But very few people know whom the British captain was the protagonist in this tale.

"Japie" and Capt. Seely's tale:

During the Anglo-Boer War Japie's father and 2 older brothers went on commando to fight against the British.

One evening in March 1901, Japie's father's commando spent the night on the farm. The British were short on their heels. The morning after the commando left the British arrived. Captain J.E.B. Seely found evidence of the commando spending the night. He then saw the 10 year old (almost 11) Japie and demanded he tell them where the commando went.

Japie refused. Capt. Seely was, however determined to get the information and ordered his troops to let Japie stand against the house's wall in front of a firing squad. He gave Japie a final chance to give him the information and promised that he would let him go if he told him what he wanted to know. Japie still refused to disclose the information saying "I will not say".

The captain barked a command, and the sergeant reported it to his men. Six soldiers stepped up, dropped to the ground on one knee, rifles cocked, their fingers on the triggers. The boy could have no doubts about the intentions of the British. Seely ordered his troops to take aim. "Ready!..." He ordered them to stop, went to Japie, shook his hand and told him that he would one day like to see him again. The British mounted their horses and rode off, and the mother burst through the door to hug her son.



Seely returned to South Africa in 1931 and tried to find Japie, but Japie did not want to meet with him. After Seely returned to the UK he sent his lieutenant (AA Hawkins) to find Japie. By means of Japie's lawyer in Bethlehem, where he was farming at that stage, Hawkins met up with Japie and handed him the copy of the book (Fear, and be slain: adventures by land, sea and air) that Seely wrote.

In the foreword the captain wrote:

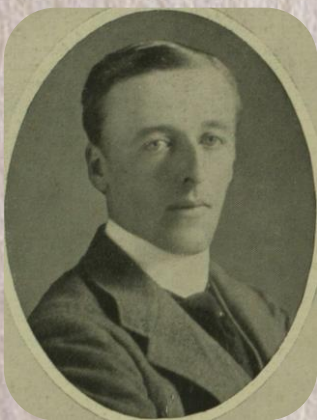
"[Japie] whose courageous bearing and fearless answer earned the admiration and respect of myself, their commander."

In the book Seely wrote:

"Then I saw one of the most beautiful things that I have ever seen in my life. The boy was transfigured by patriotism and devotion. He lifted his head, looked me straight in the face, put his hands behind his back and said in a loud clear voice: "Ich sall ne sag" (that is: I will not say). As long as I live I shall never forget that wonderful moment when love of father, home and country triumphed over imminent and apparently certain death."

Japie never spoke about his ordeal and his son, after reading a book about child heroes at school, learned from his teacher that the one hero in the book was his own father. After asking his father about it, his father (Japie) replied: "You have read the story already". Japie was very modest about the incident and asked that his story should never be used as propaganda against the British. He also stated that people often, during extraordinary circumstances, such as war, do things that they normally would not do.

So Whom was Jack Seely ?



Major General John Edward Bernard Seely (Jack), 1st Baron Mottistone CB, CMG, DSO, TD, PC, JP, DL (31 May 1868 – 7 November 1947) was a British Army general and politician. He was a Conservative Member of Parliament (MP) from 1900 to 1904 and a Liberal MP from 1904 to 1922 and from 1923 to 1924. He was Secretary of State for War for the two years prior to the First World War, before being forced to resign as a result of the Curragh Incident. As General Jack Seely, he led one of the last great cavalry charges in history at the Battle of Moreuil Wood on his war horse Warrior in March 1918. Seely was a great friend of Winston Churchill and the only former cabinet minister to go to the front in 1914 and still be there four years later.

Second Boer War

Following the outbreak of the Second Boer War he was commissioned as a captain in the Imperial Yeomanry on 7 February 1900, having succeeded in arranging transport to South Africa for his squadron the same week, with the assistance of his uncle Sir Francis Evans, 1st Baronet, chairman of the Union Castle Line. He served bravely, if a little insubordinately. He was mentioned in despatches and awarded a medal with four clasps, as well as the Distinguished Service Order (DSO) in November 1900.

Early political career

Whilst still on active service in South Africa during the Boer War, Seely was elected Member of Parliament for the Isle of Wight as a Conservative at a by-election in May 1900 and re-elected at the "Khaki" General Election that autumn. On 10 August 1901, he was promoted to the rank of major in the yeomanry, with the honorary rank of captain in the Army from 10 July. Seely was appointed a deputy lieutenant of the Isle of Wight in 1902. Along with Winston Churchill and Lord Hugh Cecil he attacked the Balfour government's

neglect of the Army. He was a strong believer in free trade and was unhappy with the Unionist (Conservative) Party's increasing support for Tariff Reform (protectionism). He also opposed the Balfour government's support for the use of Chinese Slavery in South Africa. He left the Conservative Party in March 1904 mainly over these two issues and challenged the Conservative Party to oppose him running as an Independent Conservative at the Isle of Wight by-election, 1904. They declined and he was returned unopposed. He was narrowly elected Liberal MP for Liverpool Abercromby at the 1906 General Election. Seely was promoted to the rank of lieutenant-colonel in the yeomanry on 20 June 1907, and to colonel on 31 March 1908; he was therefore known as "Colonel Seely" during his time as a politician before the First World War. Seely retired from the army on 25 August 1923, with the honorary rank of major-general. Seely was also a Colonel of the Territorial Army, an Honorary Colonel of 72nd (Hampshire), an Honorary Air Commander Auxiliary Air Force.



Seely returned to Parliament as a member of the reunited Liberal Party for the Isle of Wight at the December 1923 General Election, which saw a hung Parliament in which the Liberals supported the first Labour Government under Ramsay MacDonald. In May 1924, however, Churchill (then out of Parliament, and who had recently left the Liberal Party to become an independent "Constitutionalist", prior to re-joining the Conservatives after his return to the Commons in 1924) listed Seely in a letter to Conservative leader Stanley Baldwin as one of his group of Liberal MPs who would vote against the Labour government, and a month later mentioned Seely as a likely Liberal Conservative. Indeed, according to historian Chris



Wrigley, Seely's political trajectory was similar to that of Churchill's (i.e. a Conservative in 1900, joining the Liberals a few years later, then becoming a Conservative again in the 1920s). Seely lost his seat again at the 1924 General Election, at which the Liberals suffered heavy losses. Seely vehemently opposed the General Strike of 1926. He was made Chairman of the National Savings Committee in 1926, a post he served in until 1943, the same year he became Vice-President until his death. During this time he was asked by the Government to conduct the publicity in regard to the conversion of the 5% war loan. According to The Times, "in the Second World War the activities of the National Savings Committee were largely extended and became a vital part of the national war effort." He continued to have an influential role in domestic politics. Seely was granted the Freedom of the City of Portsmouth in 1927.

Legacy

Seely was a popular figure in the House of Commons.[100] He was described as a brave man, but it was also said unkindly of him that if he had had more brains he would be half-witted. In later life, in a play on his title, his self-promotion earned him the nickname "Lord Modest One".

The Times called him a "Gallant Figure in War and Politics" and F. E. Smith, 1st Earl of Birkenhead, wrote, "In fields of great and critical danger he has constantly over a long period of years displayed a cool valour which everybody in the world who knows the facts freely recognizes." Marshal Ferdinand Foch, Supreme Commander of the Allied Armies in the final year of World War I, gave him a cigarette case inscribed, "Au Ministre de 1912: au Vaillant de la Grande Guerre."

A screen was erected in St. Peter and St. Paul's Church, Mottistone in his memory.

Marriages and Descendants

Seely married Emily Florence, daughter of Colonel Honourable Sir Henry George Louis Crichton, on 9 July 1895. They had three sons and four daughters. She died in August 1913. His eldest son and heir, 2Lt Frank Reginald Seely, was killed in action with the Royal Hampshire Regiment at the Battle of Arras on 13 April 1917.

He married for the second time, to the Hon. Evelyn Izmé Murray, JP (born 1886, died 11 Aug 1976) on 31 July 1917. She was the widow of his friend George Crosfield Norris Nicholson and daughter of Montolieu Oliphant-Murray, 1st Viscount Elibank. They had one son (she already had a son from her previous marriage).

Seely's heir John Seely (1899–1963) was an architect whose work, in partnership with Paul Paget, included the interior of Eltham Palace in the Art Deco style, and the post-World War II restoration of a number of bomb-damaged buildings, such as the London Charterhouse and the church of St John Clerkenwell.



Seely's son from his second marriage, David Peter Seely, 4th Baron Mottistone (1920-2011), was the last Governor of the Isle of Wight; he was baptised with Winston Churchill and the then Prince of Wales (subsequently Edward VIII and then later HRH the Duke of Windsor) as his godparents.

Seely's grandson Brough Scott, who presented horseracing television programmes, wrote a biography of Seely, *Gallopers Jack* (2003). Seely was a maternal great-great-grandfather of theatre director Sophie Hunter.

Writings

- *Adventure* (1930) - featuring an introduction by Lord Birkenhead, praising his skill as a raconteur.[113]
- *Fear and Be Slain: Adventures by land, sea and air* (1931)
- *Launch! A Life-Boat Book* (1932)
- *For Ever England* (1932)
- *My Horse Warrior* (1934) – a biography of his charger
- *The Paths of Happiness* (1938)

Japie's Death Notice:

STERFKENNIS.

VOLGENS DIE VOORSKRIFTE VERVAT IN DIE BOEDELWET, 1913.



1. Naam van die oorledene JACOB JOHANNES CORNELIS GREYLING
2. Geboorteplek en Nasionaliteit van oorledene Hoopstad, S.A.
3. Name en Adresse van die Ouers van die oorledene
- | | |
|--------|--------------------------|
| Vader | Barend Cornelis Greyling |
| Moeder | |
4. Ouderdom van oorledene 64 jaar 2 maande.
5. Beroep van die oorledene, of, indien 'n vrou, van haar eggenoot Boer
6. Gewone woonplek van die oorledene, of, indien 'n vrou, van haar eggenoot { Zonderhout, distrik Fouriesburg.
7. Gehuud of ongehuud, wewenaar of weduwee Gehuud
- (a) Naam van oorhywende eggenoot (indien enige), en of in gemeenskap van goedere gehuud of nie { Adriana Catharina Greyling (gebore Louw)
- (b) Naam of name en so na moontlik, die dag van oorlyde van voorgelede eggenoot of eggenote {
- (c) Plek van laaste huwelik Kroonstad
8. Sterfdag : Op 17 Augustus 1954.
9. Sterfplek { Huis Andries Pretoriusstraat 69,
Dorp of Plaas Bloemfontein.
Distrik Bloemfontein.
Martha Catharina Havenga (gebore Greyling)
10. Name van kinders van oorledene en of hulle meerderjarig of minderjarig is. { Japie de Villiers Greyling - meerderjarige.

Gee afsonderlik die name op van die kinders wat uit die verskillende huwelike gebore is, en vermeld die geboortedag van elke minderjarige. Name moet voluit geskrywe word. Wanneer daar geen kinders is nie, en een of beide ouers oorlede is, gee dan die name en adresse op van die broers en susters van die oorledene.

11. Het die oorledene losse goedere nagelaat ? Ja
12. Het die oorledene vaste goedere nagelaat ? Ja
13. Is die boedel na skatting meer as £300 werd ? Ja
14. Het die oorledene 'n testament nagelaat ? Ja

Gedagteken op Bethlehem hierdie 27e dag van Januarie 1955.

(Handtekening) *H. B. Greyling*
Eggenote teenwoordig by sterfbod.

(Handtekening van die eggenote moet ingevul word deur die naaste bloed- of aanverwant van die Oorledene, wat hom ten tyde van die oorlyde op of by die sterfplek bevind of, by gebreke van sodanige bloed- of aanverwant, deur die persoon wat ten tyde van, of onmiddellik na die dood die hooftoesig het in die huis of op die plaas, waar die sterfgeval voorgeval het, en moet binne veertien dae na die dood, in dubbel, gestuur word hetsy aan die Meester, of indien die sterfgeval plaasgevind het in 'n distrik waar geen provinsiale regeringstelsel gevestig is nie, aan die magistraat van die distrik.)

(Verneem in watter hoedanigheid en of asdan op of by die sterfplek.)

Hierdie sterfkennis moet ingevul en geteken word deur die naaste bloed- of aanverwant van die Oorledene, wat hom ten tyde van die oorlyde op of by die sterfplek bevind of, by gebreke van sodanige bloed- of aanverwant, deur die persoon wat ten tyde van, of onmiddellik na die dood die hooftoesig het in die huis of op die plaas, waar die sterfgeval voorgeval het, en moet binne veertien dae na die dood, in dubbel, gestuur word hetsy aan die Meester, of indien die sterfgeval plaasgevind het in 'n distrik waar geen provinsiale regeringstelsel gevestig is nie, aan die magistraat van die distrik.